Roads to Success

New! Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood will share "Roads to Success," a collection of stories from professionals working in childhood programs, such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. There are many roads to success but each story is as unique as the professional who is sharing it. These stories are also available at the bottom of the Early Connections website.
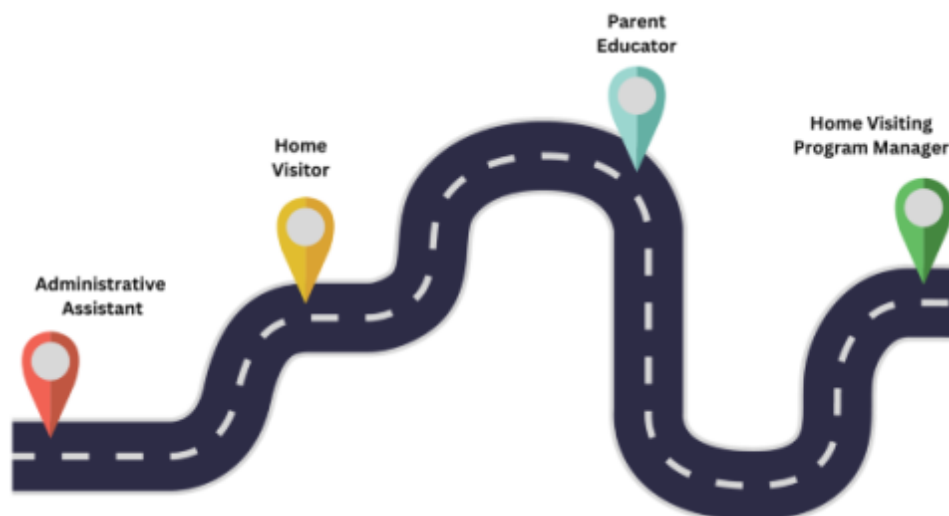
Photo Credit: Joanna Pohl, M.Ed.

This month's "Road to Success" focuses on Victoria Campos, a home visiting program manager. From a young age, Victoria knew she wanted a career in early childhood. Early in her career, Victoria accepted a position as an administrative assistant at Triality (now Easterseals Midwest) where she worked with home visiting, autism, and Head Start programs. Soon after, Victoria's supervisor approached her about working as a home visitor. After about a year, she was offered a full-time position as a parent educator, and in July 2023, Victoria was promoted to home visiting program manager, overseeing the bilingual team. She finds this work rewarding because it allows her to continue to work with families and watch them accomplish their goals, as well as oversee new parent educators as they grow in their careers.

Victoria believes that everyone is called to contribute to the world in some way and her job is "how I give myself to the world - it is my mission."

Here is what Victoria's road to success looks like!

NEW! Child Care Data System

In December, OOC launched the new Child Care Data System (CCDS) for parents applying for child care assistance. Later this month the system will open for child care providers contracted to receive state payment for child care services.

The CCDS consolidates multiple outdated systems into a single web-based system for child care subsidy. The system makes it easier to process provider applications, authorizations, and payments. Providers will be able to enter, change, and view information in real time, as long as their security clearance permits access to the information. This system will improve accountability and reduce confusion when users can view the same information at the same time.

The CCDS also provides centralized messaging to and from providers through a message board and a chat feature, which allows providers to chat live to get help.

For more information on how to create and connect provider accounts in CCDS, such as recorded webinars and quick step documents, visit the OOC Child Care Data System webpage under "For Providers".

News & Updates

NEW! 2023 Accomplishments in OOC

Last year was a year full of accomplishments in the Office of Childhood (OOC). Several new systems were launched and there was an increase in the number of children receiving developmental screenings and child care slots.

Learn about all of the OOC's 2023 accomplishments here.

UPDATE! Office of Childhood Contact Information

Did you know OOC publishes a printable Contact Us document that includes

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to children birth to age five in every zip code in Missouri. Parents can register their children to receive one free book per month at no cost to families. Parents, visit Dolly Parton's Imagination Library webpage under "Check Availability" to sign up today!

Did you also know that as a compliment to their monthly book, The Dollywood Foundation provides library resources to children and their families? This includes activity sheets, reading tips, and success stories!

You can find those family resources at: Parent Resources Archives - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

NEW! Early Childhood Integrated Data System is Live!

OOC is excited to announce the launch of Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS). The system aims to provide an un-duplicated count of children participating in ECIDS programs and outcomes based on Missouri's school readiness indicators. Here's a few tips to help you navigate the ECIDS Landing Page:

The DESE OOC webpage now has a blue "ECIDS" button on the right side that goes to the ECIDS Landing Page, where you can see the current un-duplicated count of children participating in an ECIDS program at the top of the screen.

Example:

the phone numbers and email addresses for every program administered by OOC?

There is also an accompanying What We Do webpage that lists the section and team leaders for OOC programs.

Both of these pages were recently updated with current contact information.

REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda and related presentation materials will be posted on the ECSAC meeting webpage approximately one week before the meeting.

NEW! Child Care Licensing Checklists

OOC is excited to announce that new child care licensing checklists are available on our website.

The updated documents include more detail on the steps of the licensing process, as well as links to forms, resources, and more.

Once on the ECIDS Landing Page, there is a list of nearly 20 reports that contain information about specific programs in ECIDS or other data related to school readiness indicators.

Note: Check out the Data Source note at the bottom of each report to see the original source of information; not all reports contain information on programs in ECIDS. In addition, the bottom of ECIDS program reports will show a note that fewer than five children are suppressed per the DESE data policy.

Once you select a specific report, you can navigate back to the main Landing Page by clicking on the Home Button on the left side of the header.

Example:

These reports are just the beginning! OOC will add more reports in 2024, including Kindergarten Entry Assessment, well-check visits, birth weight, and children who are homeless. Parents as Teachers parent education and child care subsidy program data will also be added to ECIDS in 2024.

Learn about the purpose of the system in ECIDS 101, and the indicators and data sources in School Readiness Indicators.

Questions? Contact us at: Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

ANNOUNCEMENT! Additional MOQPK Grants Available for Child Care Programs

Round 3 of the Missouri Quality Prekindergarten Child Care (MOQPK-CC) grant is now open.

All child care programs, as defined in Section 210.201, RSMo, that are licensed under Section 210.221, RSMo, at the time of application, or that

Checklists are available for those seeking to be licensed as a family child care home, group child care home, or center.

Visit the Licensing Resource Documents webpage to view the checklists.

NEW! Funding to Help Improve Maternal Health

On December 6, 2023, Governor Mike Parson announced that the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) will release new funding to help improve the health of pregnant women and support their care after childbirth to reduce maternal mortality and poor health outcomes.

Read the news release here.

NEW! Scholarships for Home Visitors

Enrollment for home visitors to receive a T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarship began in December 2023.

For more information, email Child Care Aware® of Missouri at: info@mochildcareaware.org.

UPDATE! Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) Program Information

are unlicensed and contracted with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) child care subsidy program at the time of application, are eligible to apply for the MOQPK-CC Grant opportunity.

Visit the MOQPK website to review Round 3 guidance and to complete the online application.

The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, January 31, 2024**.

UPDATE! 2024 Conference on the Young Years: Registration Open

Registration is now open for the 51st Annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY), which will be held March 7-9, 2024, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri.

Learn more about the conference and register to attend on the CYY webpage.

New! Grant Opportunities Available to Increase Access to Licensed Child Care Programs

Two new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-Discretionary grants are available to increase access to licensed child care programs within child care desert areas in Missouri.

- **Child Care Start-up for Licensed Programs.** If you are interested in requesting funding to open a new, licensed child care program, please review the Instructions and Terms & Conditions on the Child Care Start Up – Licensed webpage before you apply.
- **Child Care Expansion for Infants and Toddlers**. If you are interested in adding additional slots for infants and toddlers to your

The CCHC Program Map and Contact List has been updated for 2024.

The CCHC Program Map has been updated to show which counties have coverage for CCHC Program Services for 2024, and identifies which local public health agency (LPHA) to contact about services available in each county.

There is a LPHA Contact List attached to the map that lists the county and contact information for each LPHA that offers CCHC program services.

The updated CCHC Program Map and LPHA Contact List, as well as information about the CCHC program, can be found here.

NEW! Practice Guides for Families

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center offers a variety of practice guides that are intended for home visitors to share with families.

The guides cover topics such as "seeing my child's strengths", "everyday learning at home", "playing with friends", and more. The practice guides are formatted for print as well as for viewing on mobile devices.

licensed program in a child care desert area, please review the Instructions and Terms & Conditions on the Discretionary Expansion for Infants and Toddlers webpage for details.

- Deadline to apply is **Tuesday, February 6, 2024.**

Two new ARPA-Discretionary grants will be released in January 2024 to support retention of current child care staff members and program enhancements.

More information coming soon in the weekly Child Care Relief Funds messages!

NEW! Missouri Agencies Launch Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Initiative

MO HealthNet, a division of the Missouri Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, DHSS, and DESE is excited to launch the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies initiative.

This initiative is designed to address not only maternal health concerns, but also pre-term pregnancies, and low birth weight and very low birth weight babies.

Read more at the Healthy Moms and Babies webpage.

NEW! DHSS Water Infrastructure Improvements

DHSS is committed to addressing lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities and the overall reduction of childhood lead exposure across the state.

With the funding appropriated under section 1464(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act, amended by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act section 2107, DHSS began an initiative to test schools and child care facilities that are in low-income areas.

Priority will be given to elementary schools with at least 50 percent of the children receiving free and reduced lunches; Head Start/child care programs serving children age 6 or younger; and facilities built before Missouri's lead ban of 1988.

Funding available for the project is $400 for each facility sampling plan and $5 per water sample.

To access the guides, visit the ECTA webpage.

UPDATE! Childhood Community Leaders Information

OOC updated its childhood community leaders webpage with maps, contact information for the leaders in your region and the local early childhood plan for your region. Childhood community leaders have developed local strategic plans to identify goals and action steps to improve the early childhood landscape in their communities.

UPDATE! OOC Outreach Webpage

The OOC Outreach webpage has been updated to include information about Early Care and Education Resource and Referral (ECERR).

ECERR helps families learn about and access the services they need to ensure that their children are safe, healthy, and successful learners.

ECERR manages a statewide call center and a self-search webpage to help families identify the ECE options and resources that best fit their needs.

Other activities include partnering with childhood community leaders to increase awareness of

Learn more about the WINN grant project and how to apply here.

All staff/caregivers working in a child care program that is licensed or contracted with the DESE subsidy program are required to track their training in the MOPD System. To see training records, each **user** must:

- Create an account in the MOPD System.
  - If you had an MOPD ID in the old system, this will connect you to your prior training records.
  - If you are new to MOPD, this will create a new MOPD ID.
- Apply for a registry profile membership. There is no fee for the membership.
- Add their employment record. The **employer** must:
  - Connect their DVN to create an organization in the MOPD system.
  - Verify the user's employment in the organization.

For more information on how to use the system, visit the MOPD webpage.

Questions? Contact mopd@dese.mo.gov.

REMINDER! Child Fire and Emergency Drills

For licensed and subsidy providers that care for infants:

Remember the licensing and license-exempt rules require you to conduct and document fire and emergency drills. OOC provides a template for documenting these drills.

A fire drill must always be conducted separately from any other type of tornado or disaster drill. It is recommended that you do not do more than one drill on the same day to not confuse the children in your care.

Licensing and license-exempt rules can be found here. The emergency drill template can be found here.

early childhood programs and services and local resources, as well as local early childhood strategic planning.

For more information about ECERR, view this flyer.

COMING SOON! Additional Child Care Relief Grants

OOC staff are working on two child care ARPA Discretionary grants that are expected to be released in January 2024. One grant will support retention of current child care staff members and the other grant will help reimburse program enhancements.

Watch for more details about these funding opportunities in upcoming Child Care Relief Funds weekly messages.

NEW! Child Care Subsidy Contract Information

The terms and conditions for participation in the Child Care Subsidy Program were updated effective January 1, 2024.

The revised subsidy terms and conditions were necessary to prepare for the child care data system and rules for staff members age 16 and 17 that will be in effect January 30, 2024. Please review these

terms and conditions closely.

The final text of the rule changes for licensed group child care homes and child care centers has been published in the Code of State Regulations.

The amendments allow for 16- and 17-year-olds to count in staff/child ratio, add group size limits for children 3 years of age and older, and clarify when staff/child ratios and group sizes apply throughout the day. The amended rules do not become effective until **January 30, 2024**.

To view the proposed rule updates, visit the OOC Rules & Laws webpage.

To view the Missouri Register, visit the Missouri Secretary of State's webpage.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.

Photo Credit: St. Louis Black Authors of Children's Literature website

The grand opening of a new Believe Projects® literacy lab was held Friday, December 15, 2023, at Guardian Angel Settlement Association's Child Development Center.

The Believe Projects® is an initiative developed by Julius B. Anthony, President and Founder of St. Louis Black Authors of Children's Literature, an organization dedicated to improving early literacy by creating opportunities for all children to become confident and competent readers by the end of third grade.

This Believe Projects® literacy lab marks the first to open in an early childhood education setting. The Believe Preschool 1 Literacy Lab provides children ages 0-5 years with access to more than 1,000 books – more than 80 percent of which are written by Black and Latino authors. Sponsored by the Gateway Children's Charity, the new literacy lab offers a positive learning environment that encourages creative expression and supports children in building the vocabulary and listening skills needed to be ready for kindergarten.

Sponsors of this project include Believe Projects®, St. Louis Black Authors of Children's Literature, Gateway Children's Charity, YouthBridge Community

Foundation, Build-A-Bear Foundation, Ready Readers, and The Whitaker Foundation.

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant

The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A recording and the PowerPoint slides from the November 2023 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- October 2023
- September 2023
- August 2023
- July 2023
- June 2023
- May 2023

The PDG B-5 dashboard is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Wednesday, January 31, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can access the webinar in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

Visit the OOC website to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.

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